



NEWS RELEASE

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Local Heroes Honored for Aiding Victims of Knife Slashing, Kidnapping and Animal Cruelty

An unarmed man who stopped a brutal stabbing, two men who intervened during the kidnapping of a teenage girl and two women who acted when witnessing animal cruelty were honored today by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office for their courageous and selfless actions.

"Our community is a safer place because these local heroes refused to look the other way when others needed help," Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey said. "The courage displayed by each of these honorees is nothing short of remarkable."

The Courageous Citizen Awards ceremony, held in Westchester, concludes the program for 2014 in which 16 people were honored. The District Attorney's Office presents the Courageous Citizen award four times a year to ordinary people who have performed extraordinary acts of valor and selflessness in assisting in the prosecution of criminals, saving victims, preventing crimes or even capturing suspects.

The honorees are:

Samuel Gibson, 30, of Los Angeles (Case BA358128)

On March 12, 2009, a young woman was walking to her friend's house in the Florence area when she noticed her ex-boyfriend following her. The jealous ex-boyfriend had previously beaten her and threatened to kill her.

As he began to chase after her, she tried to get away but was caught as she tried to jump over a fence. The former boyfriend punched her several times, pulled out a knife and then began cutting her face. He stabbed her six times saying, "If I can't have you, no one will!"

Hearing cries for help, Samuel Gibson located the bloodied victim trying to break away from the defendant. Gibson, who was unarmed, confronted the ex-boyfriend, who told him to leave or he was

going to get cut too. Gibson didn't back down and said he didn't fear what would happen to him. He then grabbed the victim and took her into an apartment until police arrived.

Gibson testified at the preliminary hearing that he was unafraid of the defendant because he knew it was not his time to die.

A jury found the defendant guilty of aggravated mayhem, criminal threats and assault by means likely to cause great bodily injury. The defendant was sentenced to life in state prison.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department, 77th Division.

Michael Miller, 67, and Joseph Evans, 53, both of Malibu (Case SA081047)

A 17-year-old girl was driving to school early in the morning of June 12, 2012, when she stopped at a light and a stranger suddenly jumped into her car. The man forced the teenager into the back seat and drove around Malibu for several hours. The assailant sexually assaulted the girl as he drove.

When the car's fuel light came on, he stopped at a gas station where the victim caught Michael Miller's attention. He noticed she was moving her mouth as if to say, "Help me." Miller confronted the man and put himself in front of the car to prevent him from leaving but the defendant backed out and drove off.

Joseph Evans also saw what was happening and decided to follow the car but the defendant quickly lost him. As Evans drove through a pass, he spotted the car in a turnout.

Both Miller and Evans called 911 and notified authorities of the defendant's whereabouts, which led to the kidnapper's capture and the girl's rescue.

After a jury trial, the defendant was convicted of kidnapping to commit rape, kidnapping for carjacking, child molesting, escape from arrest and vandalism. He is currently serving a 27 years-to-life state prison sentence.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Lost Hills.

Javiera Guarda, 25, and Suga Brown-Faal, 42, both of Los Angeles (Case GA077852)

On Dec. 19, 2013, Javiera Guarda was walking with a neighbor in South Los Angeles when they saw a man grab his 4-month-old pit bull puppy, lift it over his head and body-slam it to the ground. Alarmed, the women yelled at the man to stop and called police.

Two weeks later, Guarda saw the defendant abusing the dog again by dragging it on its belly on the sidewalk. Guarda followed him in her car, got out, yelled at him to let the puppy go and called police.

Suga Brown-Faal, also a witness to the puppy dragging, took multiple photos and cell phone video of the assault and turned it over to authorities when they arrived and arrested the dog owner.

Ultimately, through eyewitness accounts and video evidence, these two women helped identify the perpetrator and assisted in the prosecution of this violent offender.

Several weeks after his arrest, the defendant pleaded no contest to two counts of animal abuse and was sentenced to 16 months in state prison.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department, Southwest Division.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.